(e) whether these Colleges are authorised to announce the status of an AIDS victim; and

(f) if so, the number of cases detected till date?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) There are various tests available for confirmation of HIV based on the detection of antibodies and virus particles. These tests are : (1) Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assays [ELISA]; (2) Rapid HIV tests; (3) Western Blot [WB]; (4) Indirect fluorescent antibody test [IFA]; and (5) Polymerase Chain Reaction [PCR] for detecting virus particles.

Under the National AIDS Control Programme, ELISA and Rapid HIV Assays are being used for diagnosis of HIV infected persons, asymptomatic HIV persons and epidemiological surveillance.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The HIV status of children below the age of 2 years can be detected by a test known as Polymerase Chain reaction. Children have passive antibodies from HIV infected mothers which may not reveal the true HIV status of the child. These antibodies disappear around 18 months of age when sero conversion takes place. Thereafter, HIV can be detected by conventional tests.

(d) to (f) Yes, Sir. In children below 18 months of age, it is advised to conduct PCR test to detect the HIV particles. HIV testing machines, for detecting antibodies *i.e.* ELISA readers are available in a majority of Public Sector Medical Colleges; the machines for conducting the polymerase Chain Reaction [PCR] test are available at a few centers only, and are not recommended for routine diagnostic use. The Medical Colleges are authorized to reveal the status to the HIV/AIDS victim only, after pre and post test counseling, and maintaining full confidentiality. The cumulative number of AIDS cases, including children, reported till 31st October, 2001 is 29007.

Reasons for Heart Diseases

†*200. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indians are more prone to heart diseases in comparison to those in other countries;

(b) whether it is also a fact that most of the people consider smoking, high blood pressure, non- vegetarian food and changing life-style as a major factor for the heart diseases; and

†‹Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government to educate people in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) According to Indian Council of Medical Research, no sufficient data are available that Indians are more prone to heart diseases in comparison to other countries. The three main risk factors for coronary heart disease are smoking, physical inactivity and faulty diet. Since the causes of this disease are attributed among others to individual life style and food habits, the doctors are creating awareness among the people for adopting proper life style and food habits to control these diseases.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Process of Economic Development in NER

1355. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of measures taken by Government for accelerating the process of economic development in the North Eastern Region;

(b) whether any plan has been chalked out for this purpose;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any targets have been fixed in this context; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) The Government of India have taken the following measures to accelerate the process of development of North Eastern Region:—

(i) Implementation of the Agenda for Socio-Economic Development of North Eastern States and Sikkim as announced by the Prime Minister in January, 2000 at Shillong. The details of the projects/schemes under the Agenda are given at Statement- I. (*See* below)

(ii) North Eastern States & Sikkim are categorized as Special Category States where 90% of the Central Assistance for the plan is given as grant from Central Government.

(iii) Central Assistance is provided to support the State Development Plan. Details of assistance provided during Ninth Plan are given at